Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

riding the same horses at the rate of more than 30 miles per day. These ponies can carry a load of 200 lbs. or upwards, and pieces of wood 10 or 15 feet long can be carried by them over the highest and steepest ground on the route. The best line for the telegraph lies to the south of that they travelled over, and is marked on the chart by a dotted line. Along this route there is abundance of water, and grass also, except at one station, to supply which a depôt of hay could be made. This portion of the way (about the centre of Iceland), called the Springisandr Road, is almost a flat table-land. Again, some of the larger rivers that flow northward appear to be navigable for boats similar to those used in Hudson's Bay, which carry from three to four tons weight. By this means materials could be deposited at several stations near to the proposed line. He did not profess to be a surveyor, but having travelled a good deal both in the United States and Canada, he had seen telegraphs carried over more difficult and rougher country than they encountered in crossing Iceland. But should objections be offered to carrying the telegraph completely across the island, he was of opinion, from information obtained, that Portland, in the south of Iceland, although no safe harbour for ships, would form a good landing-place for a cable. From Portland to Reikiavik the distance is not over 90 miles, and the road offers no obstacles. The object of their journey was not to make a minute or detailed survey, but to determine if it were practicable to carry a telegraph over the island.

The second Paper read was—

2. *Further Details relative to the Discoveries in Central Australia.*

By Mr. J. Macdouall Stuart.

Communicated by Sir R. I. Murchison.

The expedition of Mr. Stuart, to which the present journals refer, took place in the year 1859, and was introductory to the great journey which he made through the middle of Australia. Mr. Stuart's object was a thorough examination of the country including and adjacent to that remarkable district of springs which lies between the 28th and 29th parallels of s. latitude and the 136th and 137th w. meridians. Many of these were first discovered in the present expedition, and the entire list includes the springs of Hope, Strangways, Fanny, Freeling, and Primrose.

The waters from nearly all of them run in the rainy season into the Neales, which supplies a large saline lake that extends between the above-mentioned parallels and apparently still further to the north. It represents a middle section of that large horse-shoe representation of water which appears in early maps of Australia under the name of Lake Torrens, but which recent discoveries have shown to be discontinuous. The opposite side of the lake was in no case seen by Mr. Stuart; however, the low shores afforded him no point of view of a greater altitude than 30 feet.

On the road between the Strangways and the Hope, Mr. Stuart found a remarkable specimen of that peculiar type of springs which characterize much of this part of Australia. Observing a hill at the head of a salt lagoon, upwards of 100 feet in height, and having the appearance of rushes growing on the summit, he climbed to the top, and found such was really the case, and that the reeds and rushes were due to a collection of water upwards of 100 feet in length, that trickled over and oozed through the sides of its basin and finally drained into the lake below.

SIR RODERICK MURCHISON said, as this Paper had been sent to him by Messrs. Chambers and Fincke, he felt it necessary to lay before the Society a general view of the relations this Paper bore to Mr. Stuart's discoveries. In the first instance that traveller explored the very region which had just been described; and on a subsequent occasion he made that remarkable journey almost across the continent which had been recently made known. But they were quite ignorant of the fact, that between these two explorations, he had diverged from his route to the east, and, to his surprise, he found the rivers which ran to the east, falling into a low saline country, and ultimately into an intensely salt lake. About sixty or seventy miles farther northward he still found this great salt lake, and mounting the highest hill in the neighbourhood, could not see the end of this saline depression.

On a former occasion he (Sir R. M.) and Count Strzelecki apologised for having endeavoured to speculate too much upon the supposition of there being a saline lake in the interior, Mr. Stuart having found oasis after oasis of good land, and having discovered, as Colonel Gawler had suggested, that there was a vast region of country capable of colonization. But admitting all this, he (Sir R. M.) was still prepared, from the evidence of the last paper, to suggest the probability of the existence of a central saline desert. There was room enough for this low arid depression between the fertile regions claimed by Colonel Gawler to the westward, and the countries to the east, which were known to be fit for occupation. At present, however, they were only theorists, and must be theorists until the country was more opened up. Yet he maintained that the theory of an interior saline tract had something to rest upon, for Sturt, Stuart, and Gregory, the first on the east, the second on the west, and the third on the north, had been stopped by saline interior tracts. These facts showed that Colonel Strzelecki and himself were not altogether wrong as to the physical geography of this region. In conclusion Sir Roderick pointed out the value of Mr. Stuart's researches, and expressed his hope that the Society would, at a very early day, confer upon that remarkable man one of its highest honours, and at the same time return their cordial thanks to Messrs. Chambers and Fincke for the munificent manner in which they had acted.

MR. J. BAKER, a member of the Legislative Council of South Australia, said he believed that the theory of Sir Roderick Murchison would prove to be correct. Having a thorough knowledge of the country, he had no doubt, from the direction of the water-courses, that there was a considerable depression and probably a large lake in the interior. He went into the neighbourhood whence Mr. Stuart started on his first expedition, and he performed a long journey with Mr. Fincke, in the expectation of finding a lake in that direction. The natives, in describing the country, indicated the existence of a depression into which the drainage from the east and west flowed. They also gave them to understand that large fish were to be found there, and that there were numerous springs frequented by wild fowl, including the black swan. A subsequent visit realised the descriptions given by the natives as to the springs and wild fowl, and he had no doubt that their other indications with respect to a depression in the interior would prove to be correct. In 1858 the Deputy-Surveyor-General, in an excursion to that country, discovered what he supposed to be a lake, but upon making a subsequent exploration he was surprised to find no lake there at all, but merely a water-washed plain, the waters of which had subsided in a very short space of time. Now where could that water have gone if there were not some larger reservoir to receive it? There was not time for evaporation or absorption, and in his opinion it must have gone into this larger reservoir still farther to the north.

But, while believing in the truth of Sir Roderick Murchison's theory, he at the same time hoped that the expectations of Colonel Gawler would be fulfilled, and that the good country which Mr. Stuart had traversed would become available for colonization, and for supplying with stock the settlement which would one day, no doubt, be formed on the Victoria River. It had already been proposed to organise a party for the purpose of sending a small quantity of stock from South Australia to the North, with the view to form the nucleus of some future settlement on that river.

Mr. Baker next dwelt upon the supplies of wool and produce which the region in question would probably be the means of contributing to the English markets, and to the great outlet which it would afford for drawing off the surplus population of this country, and thus diminish the mass of poverty which struck an Australian with surprise upon visiting London for the first time.

In conclusion Mr. Baker said he felt it was but an act of justice to vindicate Mr. Fincke from some imputation cast upon his honour and integrity in a despatch which had been sent over to this country and read before the Geographical Society.

SIR RODERICK MURCHISON assured Mr. Baker that no such despatch had been received, and that the name of Mr. Fincke, which had only recently been made known to the Society, was duly honoured by them.

COLONEL GAWLER said he was perfectly gratified if but one part of his theory should remain, viz., that there should be an open road for stock, railways, a telegraph, and so on, from the south-eastern provinces to the north-western coast. Mr. Stuart had established that this did exist, and that the settlers who followed his footsteps might travel with ease and security, and establish themselves in the country with much facility. It was known that there was also much good land to the eastward, and it only remained for this country to take advantage of these discoveries. It was also desirable that a colony should be formed on the north-western coast, and on the Victoria River, for the sake of receiving the stock and merchandise which would come up to it from the south-east colonies. No time should be lost, because squatters and bushmen would be settling on the land; and (as he had heard from Mr. Baker) a party had already set out with stock to traverse the route Mr. Stuart had opened up, in the endeavour to find shipment on the Victoria River for the south of India. If this region were settled he had no doubt a railway and telegraphic communication would soon be carried across the Continent, the latter to be continued to Singapore, and thence to England. Colonel Gawler proceeded to remark upon the results of Mr. Stuart's discovery, and argued that, from the evidences of its being an auriferous district, it ought to be brought under law as speedily as possible.

The PRESIDENT, in closing the discussion, remarked upon what he termed the dramatic manner in which the structure of Australia was little by little revealed to us. Sometimes one theory was up, sometimes another, and we had seen the life and death of theories within the last few weeks. He had no doubt the expeditions which had just been sent out would clear up all these uncertainties and show us what Australia was really made of.